

DO (PERCEPTIONS OF) ELECTORAL POLLING AFFECT THE VOTE? CAMPAIGN EFFECTS, PARTISAN BIAS, AND STRATEGIC VOTING IN MEXICO

¿Las (percepciones de las) encuestas electorales afectan al voto? Efectos de campaña, sesgo partidista y voto estratégico en México

As (percepções de) pesquisas eleitorais afetam o voto? Efeitos de campanha, viés partidário e votação estratégica no México

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Abstract

The manuscript highlights the major role that partisanship plays in moderating voters' interpretation of polling information and incentives to behave strategically. While prior studies highlight that partisans are less likely to vote strategically as the expressive costs of defection increase, this study sheds light on the conditions in which voters—even partisans—behave strategically and which contribute to an increase in the proportion of voters who change their vote intention during campaigns. Only partisans informed about polls are able to overcome their partisan bias and engage in strategic voting. By taking strategic voting into account in the study of campaigns, the present work builds a bridge between the campaigns effects literature and studies on strategic voting.

Palabras clave:
*encuestas; voto
estratégico;
campañas;
opinión pública;
América Latina*

Resumen

Este artículo subraya el importante papel de la identidad partidista al moderar las percepciones que hacen los votantes de la información proveniente de encuestas electorales así como los incentivos que los votantes tienen para comportarse estratégicamente. Mientras que estudios anteriores argumentaban que los votantes partidistas tenían menor probabilidad de votar estratégicamente dado que los costos expresivos de defección se incrementan, este estudio estudia las condiciones por las cuales los votantes —inclusos los partidistas— se comportan estratégicamente, lo que contribuye a incrementar la proporción de votantes que cambian de intención de voto durante las campañas. Sólo aquellos partidistas informados acerca de las encuestas electorales son capaces de superar su sesgo partidista y votar de manera estratégica. Al tomar en cuenta el voto estratégico en el estudio de las campañas electorales, el presente trabajo crea un puente entre la literatura de efectos de campañas y voto estratégico.

Palavras-chave:
*votação;
votação
estratégica;
campanhas;
opinião pública;
América latina*

Resumo

Este artigo destaca o importante papel da identidade partidária na moderação das percepções dos eleitores sobre os dados das pesquisas, bem como os incentivos que os eleitores têm para se comportar estrategicamente. Considerando que estudos anteriores argumentaram que os eleitores partidários eram menos propensos a votar estrategicamente à medida que os custos de deserção expressiva aumentavam, este estudo explora as condições sob as quais os eleitores — incluindo os partidários — se comportam estrategicamente, o que contribui para aumentar a proporção de eleitores que mudam sua intenção de voto durante as campanhas. Somente os partidários informados sobre as pesquisas eleitorais conseguem superar seu viés partidário e votar estrategicamente. Ao levar em consideração o voto estratégico no estudo de campanhas eleitorais, este artigo estabelece uma ponte entre a literatura sobre efeitos de campanha e o voto estratégico.

1. INTRODUCTION

Research in Latin American political behavior has focused on persuasion (Greene, 2011), the interpersonal social networks (Baker, Ames, and Renno, 2020), and priming (Hart, 2013) as major mechanisms of campaign influence. This study argues that vote shifts in young democracies are also driven by voters' strategic behavior. Based on the Mexican case—a country where partisanship is considered to be weak (Greene, 2011) but which recent studies suggest is stronger than previously considered (Castro Cornejo, 2021)—, this research focuses on electoral polls' effects on voters' behavior. Specifically, it studies the role that partisanship plays in moderating voters' responsiveness to polling information, which, in turn, ultimately shapes voters' expectations about the outcome of the election and their incentives to defect from or remain loyal to their co-partisan candidate. While most of the campaigns literature has characterized voters supporting candidates against their

pre-campaign political predispositions as a product of persuasion, this study argues for an alternative mechanism: voters' strategic behavior. By taking strategic voting into account in the study of campaigns, the present work builds a bridge between the campaigns effects literature and studies on strategic voting and provides a complete picture of the reasons why so many voters change their vote preference throughout presidential elections campaigns in Latin America.

In particular, this study identifies the role that partisanship plays by shaping voters' incentives to abandon or remain loyal to their candidate. Unlike independents who have more incentives to defect since—by definition—they do not have partisan attachments to their candidate, this study focuses on why some partisans who support candidates trailing in the polls turn into strategic voters. Based on a survey conducted during the 2006 presidential election in Mexico, this study finds that only partisans informed about polls are able to overcome their partisan bias and engage in strategic voting. While prior studies highlight that partisans are less likely to vote strategically as the expressive costs of defection increase (Gschwend, 2007; Plescia, 2017), this study sheds light on the conditions under which voters—even partisans—behave strategically and contribute to an increase in the proportion of voters who change their vote intention during campaigns. This is why, contrary to the theoretical expectation that the connection between partisanship and vote choice becomes stronger as election day draws near (Gelman and King, 1993), this connection weakens as voters become aware that their co-partisan candidate is not likely to win the election. The second part of this research presents evidence from an original survey experiment conducted during the 2015 gubernatorial elections in Mexico in order to identify a causal relationship between polling information and voting behavior.

The findings of this paper contribute to the literature on campaigns by identifying a different mechanism that makes campaigns matter in young democracies. Some voters are willing to abandon their co-partisan candidate as a result of strategic considerations. Polling information does not affect voters' partisanship; voters still self-identify with their party but decide to behave strategically given the electoral context a few days before election day.

2. DO POLLS INFLUENCE VOTERS' ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR?

Campaigns are consequential in Latin America. To understand the important number of voters who report changing their vote intention throughout campaigns, the literature has highlighted the persuasive role interpersonal social networks (Baker, Ames, and Renno, 2006 and 2020) and mass media (Lawson, 2012; Lawson and McCann, 2005) play in vote choice, as well as campaign effects like persuasion (Greene, 2011), activation (Castro Cornejo, 2021), and priming (Hart,

2013). In contrast, this study focuses on voters' reactions to electoral polls, which can affect voters' behavior as election day approaches—a topic understudied by the campaigns literature.

As Cox suggests in his seminal research (1997), voters anticipate the likely outcome of the election, and polls provide valuable information about how the parties and candidates are doing. Polling information enables voters to engage in strategic voting (Blais, Gidengil, and Nevitte, 2006; Merolla, 2009; Meffert *et al.*, 2011) when their preferred candidate is unlikely to win the election. Voters ultimately support a party or a candidate that is not their preferred choice to avoid wasting their vote and to affect the election's outcome (Cox, 1997; Abramson *et al.*, 1992; Aldrich *et al.*, 2018). In comparative politics, a range of studies have highlighted the importance of voters' strategic behavior, particularly in institutional settings that offer voters the possibility to cast their ballots strategically (e.g. United Kingdom: Alvarez and Nagler, 2000; Alvarez, Boehmke, and Nagler, 2006; Canada: Merolla and Stephenson, 2007; Blais, Young, and Turcotte, 2005; France: Blais, 2004; Daoust, 2015; among others). In general terms, the literature has found that between 4 % and 8 % of the electorate are able to vote strategically (Aldrich *et al.*, 2018; Daoust and Bol, 2018). This number is, in fact, not small since only a subset of the electorate—those who support non-viable candidates or parties—finds themselves in a situation in which they have incentives to behave strategically (Alvarez *et al.*, 2006; Daoust and Bol, 2018).

As far as polling information influencing voters' behavior is concerned, prior studies have found polling effects on candidates' viability (Bartels, 1988), the salience of candidates' attributes (Hardy and Jamieson, 2005), and voters' knowledge (Boudreau and McCubbins, 2010), a «bandwagon» effect, where voters rally to leading candidates (Nadeau, Cloutier, and Guay, 1993; Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1994; Morton *et al.*, 2015), an «underdog» effect, where vote intention changes in the direction of the trailing candidate (Ceci and Kain, 1982; Chatterjee and Kamal, 2019) and, relevant for the purposes of this paper, strategic voting (Blais, Gidengil, and Nevitte, 2006; Rickershauser and Aldrich, 2007; Merolla, 2009; Blais *et al.*, 2018). For example, Blais, Gidengil, and Nevitte (2006) find that voters in the 1988 Canadian election responded to the information provided by the polls by engaging in strategic voting. In fact, voters' expectations, vote intentions, and evaluations were correlated with variations in the information provided by polls. Merolla's (2009) study in the U.S. finds that respondents were more likely to switch their vote when provided with some information about the competitive context of the election. The polling effects were particularly strong when respondents were exposed to explicit coordination signals.

More recently, Blais *et al.* (2018) used an experimental design similar to the one explained in the following sections to analyze whether voters are more likely to vote strategically when provided with objective information about candidates'

and parties' standing in the 2015 Canadian Federal election. This election included two center-left parties (the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party) and several smaller parties that competed for the position of principal challenger to the incumbent Conservative Party. The study randomly assigned respondents to receive information on candidates' vote shares and finds, however, that polling information did not significantly affect voters' behavior. In addition to the different context in which the Canadian election took place (e.g. a well-established Westminster-style democratic regime) compared to Latin American context of this paper, one potential explanation about their null results relates to the moderating effect of partisanship. While their analysis controls for partisanship, they do not explore potential differences on partisan subgroups and independents, which, as this paper argues, have different incentives to engage in strategic voting.

Partisanship is known to affect individuals' proclivity to vote strategically. Several studies have demonstrated that partisanship affects voters' expectations about who is likely to win the election (Lewis-Beck and Tien, 1999; Blais and Bodet, 2006; Meffert *et al.*, 2011) and find that partisans are less likely to behave strategically (Gschwend, 2007; Niemi *et al.*, 1992; Plescia, 2019). Partisans have both instrumental and expressive concerns: they mainly care about supporting their preferred party or their co-partisan candidate. The benefit of doing so stems from the intrinsic rewards of casting a vote for their candidate/party (Hamlin and Jennings, 2011): voting expresses some aspect of voters' beliefs, values or partisan identity. Therefore, even though some literature finds third-party voting as striking (Raymond and Tromborg, 2016), campaign studies—consistent with the expressive voting literature—expect a strong connection between partisanship and vote choice as election day gets closer (Gelman and King, 1993). Particularly in a context of party polarization, partisans tend to develop an in-group favoritism and an out-group hostility that make partisan identities stronger (e.g. an 'us' versus 'them' attitude, Tajfel and Turner, 1979; Iyengar and Krupenkin, 2018). This context makes some partisans likely to support their co-partisan candidate, even if voters' rational calculations do not follow such an expectation. In some cases, partisans will support their co-partisan candidate, even one they do not view favorably, in order to avoid having another party win the election. A possible exception to this behavior would be partisans with a strong negative partisanship—i.e., loathing of the opposing party and its candidates (Abramowitz and Weber, 2018)—who, given the chance, would be willing to defect from their co-partisan candidate in order to avoid a very disliked party or candidate winning the election.

Theories of partisanship, thus, allow for some partisans to defect from their party and vote for an alternative candidate. In the end, party identification is not defined in terms of voting behavior; rather, it constitutes an exogenous variable that helps citizens make sense of the political world and strongly affects voters' opinion formation and electoral behavior (Campbell *et al.*, 1960; Lewis-Beck *et al.*,

2008). Campaigns, in turn, allow parties and candidates to activate partisan attachments, making the connection between partisanship and vote choice stronger as election day approaches. Nevertheless, some partisans do not support their co-partisan candidates and engage in strategic voting. This study agrees with previous research that partisans should be less likely to engage in strategic voting and aims to understand why they do defect. It is less theoretically interesting to understand independents' behavior: they do not have partisan attachments that make them loyal to their candidate. Rather, the interesting puzzle is why partisans defect, and this paper seeks to account for the conditions under which partisans behave strategically.

It is important to highlight that the literature has paid less attention to strategic voting in younger democracies, particularly in Latin America, even though voters in these countries have incentives to engage in strategic voting given the combination of multiparty systems and FPTP electoral rules. The single-round plurality rule in Mexico and two-round elections in most South American countries provide voters with strong incentives to engage in strategic voting in the first round and support a candidate with a better chance of advancing to the second round. Some exceptions constitute studies of strategic voting during Mexico's transition to democracy period (Domínguez, 2009; Bruhn, 1999; Magaloni and Poiré, 2000 and Abramson *et al.*, 2010) and studies that examine strategic voting in midterm elections in Mexico (Poiré, 2000). More recently, Weitz-Shapiro and Winters (2019) study the first round in the 2015 presidential election in Argentina and find that between 6 % and 10 % of the electorate behaved strategically. This study focuses on the 2006 presidential election and the 2015 gubernatorial elections in Mexico which provide both institutional and electoral incentives for voters to engage in strategic voting: a three-party system where a party or a candidate wins if it or he gets the most votes and a third-party trails in the polls.

3. POLLING INFORMATION, PARTISAN BIAS, AND STRATEGIC VOTING IN YOUNG DEMOCRACIES

Strategic voters do not want to waste their votes on candidates that have no chance of winning the election. Such an electoral context makes them change their vote intention and support an alternative candidate barely a few days before election day. In other words, as Aldrich, Blais, and Stephenson (2018) suggest, strategic voting is the marriage of expectations and preferences. From the perspective of a rational voter, the main goal of the vote is to maximize expected utility (Downs, 1957). In order to do so, voters have to take into account the expected outcome of the election (Cox, 1997). Based on these expectations, it is possible that voters would better benefit from defecting from their most preferred party

/ candidate if it / he has a low chance of winning. However, consistent with the literature on long-standing democracies, not all individuals are expected to rely on objective information to inform their vote decisions (Meffert and Gschwend, 2011). Voters form expectations about parties' chance of winning on the basis of both objective contextual information and their own political predispositions (Blais and Bodet, 2006; Meffert and Gschwend, 2011). This means that voters' partisan bias implies a directional motivation that makes them overestimate the chances of their preferred parties and underestimate the chances of their disliked parties (Mutz, 1998; Blais and Turgeon, 2004; Meffert *et al.*, 2011).

How do these findings travel to young democracies? While some research on Latin America argues that partisanship in the region is weak, recent studies have found that partisanship is not as weak as previously expected; in fact, previous findings seem to be an artifact of question wording (Baker and Renno, 2019; Castro Cornejo, 2019). Moreover, partisans in Latin America tend to behave like partisans in long-standing democracies: they are more informed, engaged, and likely to participate in the political process (Lupu, 2015). This means that voters' partisan attachments can ultimately affect their capacity to accurately perceive polling information (Gaines *et al.*, 2007; Bartels, 2000; Lupia, 1992), making them filter polling information and potentially reject pieces inconsistent with their partisan predispositions (Green *et al.*, 2002; Zaller, 1992). Partisans' biased expectations are very relevant for voters' subsequent strategic behavior because they ultimately highlight incentives for voters to remain loyal to their co-partisan candidate or defect.

Based on the preceding discussion, the first hypothesis of this paper examines voters' perceptions of polling information, particularly which candidate is expected to win the election, which is expected something that is expected to differ among partisans and independents:

H1. Opinion Formation Effect (Expectations): Partisans are more likely to engage in biased assimilation of polling information than independents.

The following two hypotheses study the effects of polling on vote choice. As discussed previously, polling information increases the proportion of voters who change their vote preference throughout the campaign—a measure that helps campaign studies assess if campaigns are consequential on voters' behavior (Lawson and McCann, 2004; Baker Ames, and Renno, 2006; Greene, 2011). This study considers two plausible paths. First is a learning effect: polling information helps undecided voters reach a defined vote preference. As Hillygus's and Jackman's (2003) study of campaign effects finds, this group is sometimes omitted by campaign studies (which only focus on voters who change vote preference

from one party to another), but represents one of the largest groups that change vote preference during campaigns. As far as polling is concerned, voters who do not report a defined vote intention («don't know» answer) will be better able to reach that decision when they know how candidates are doing, as suggested by polling information. This effect, however, will be moderated by voters' partisan attachments. It is expected that polling information will have a stronger effect on independents who, by definition, do not have partisan attachments, and are more likely to need the contextual information provided by electoral polling.

H2. Learning Effect: Voters who are aware of polling information are more likely to report a defined vote intention (less likely to answer «don't know» to the vote choice question) than voters who are not aware of polling information.

Polling information also triggers a strategic voting effect and this effect is also moderated by partisan attachments. This third hypothesis highlights voters' different incentives to engage in strategic voting depending on whether they are partisans or independents. For example, most studies assume that vote choice depends on the strength of voters' preferences for their first choice relative to their preferences for their second choice and so on—merging partisan and independents into a single category in their analysis. However, even if these two groups share the same ordered preferences, they have different incentives to remain loyal to their first preference/co-partisan candidate. Since independents do not have partisan attachments, they are more likely to defect. In turn, partisans are more likely to remain loyal to their co-partisan candidate. Therefore, we should expect strategic voting to be muted among partisans. Voters' partisanship will obscure their chances of engaging in strategic voting by prioritizing expressive over instrumental concerns and overestimating their co-partisan candidate's chances of winning the election.

Which partisans can overcome their partisan bias in order to become strategic voters? The third hypothesis focuses on those voters who are aware that their co-partisan candidate is unlikely to win the election. These are the partisan voters who are more likely to overcome their partisan bias. Strategic voting requires some understanding of which candidate has a lead, which candidate lags behind, and how voters' electoral decisions can affect the outcome of the election. Partisans aware of polling information will be the most likely to understand the logic and necessity to defect and behave strategically and are, therefore, less likely to engage in partisan reinforcement or wishful thinking. Since these voters are aware of the political relevance of the information they are given and possess the contextual knowledge to understand the political implications of this information (Kuklinski and Hurley, 1994; Lau and Redlawsk, 2001), third-party partisans aware

of polling information are more likely to overcome their partisan bias than those who are not aware of that information:

H3a. Strategic Voting Effect (Polling information). Partisans aware of polling information are more likely to become strategic voters.

In an attempt to isolate cause and effect, the next section analyzes voters' responsiveness to electoral polling during the 2006 presidential election in Mexico using cross-sectional data and a survey experiment conducted during the 2015 gubernatorial elections.

4. OBSERVATIONAL DATA: THE 2006 MEXICAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

As the American politics literature suggests, the rise of the polling industry in the last decades has produced a major shift in campaign news coverage. The latter has turned into a horse race (Broh, 1980; Ansolabehere and Iyengar, 1994) and survey findings have become leading stories in breaking news (Atkin and Gaudino, 1984; Crespi, 1988). This particular news coverage with an emphasis on polling has also extended to young democracies, particularly in Latin America. In the process, electoral surveys not only take the pulse of a campaign—framing elections in terms of who is gaining the lead and who is falling behind—but also can shape elites' behavior and the media's narrative of the campaign. This, in turn, has the potential to condition voters' behavior by affecting their expectations about the election. Such is the case of electoral polling in Mexico, which has significantly increased since the country's transition to democracy in 2000, as part of the campaign media coverage.¹

The Mexican party system is fairly institutionalized for the region (Mainwaring, 2017). Since Mexico's transition to democracy and until recently,² the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the National Action Party (PAN), and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) have been the major contenders in each election. The three major parties have fairly strong organizations, meaningful party labels, and partisanship is widespread within the electorate. For example, Mexico's

1. For example, in the 2012 presidential election in Mexico, the news coverage was marked by a significant increase in the number of electoral polls published by major news outlets (from 44 to 105 polls compared to the 2006 campaign), turning electoral coverage into a horse race.

2. This changed in 2018, when MORENA, a split from the PRD, won the presidential election. This study cannot speak to recent developments in Mexico's party system.

National Electoral Study (Beltrán *et al.*, 2020) and the Mexico Panel Surveys (Lawson *et al.* 2007) find that around 60 percent of the electorate self-identifies with a political party, excluding independent leaners. The Mexican case sheds light on the conditions under which strategic behavior among voters emerges. Like many countries in Latin America, individual parties' competitiveness tends to fluctuate across time (e.g. high electoral volatility and fragmentation, Mainwaring, 2017). Indeed, a different party has won each of the last three presidential elections in Mexico (2006: PAN; 2012: PRI; 2018: Morena) and the incumbent party finished third in the last two elections. Moreover, vote intention tends to be volatile during campaigns (Lawson and McCann, 2005; Greene, 2011).

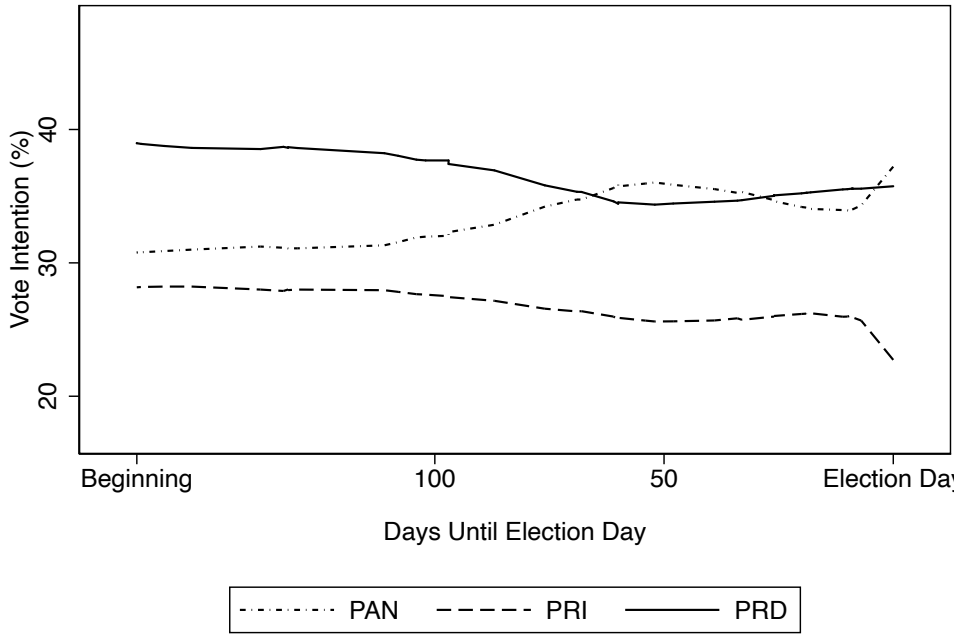
Although previous studies on the Mexican system found weak evidence of voters' strategic behavior (Domínguez, 2009), the 2006 presidential election—the first presidential election after Mexico's transition to democracy in 2000—presented voters with an ideal context to behave strategically: it consisted of two strong candidates who improved their positions in the polls as election day got closer and a medium-sized competitive candidate. According to the polls (see figure 1), as the campaign unfolded, the PRI lost support and the PAN and the PRD candidates competed for the first place. The nomination process generated divisions within the PRI since its candidate—a former party president—was unpopular among some sectors of the party, which ultimately led to an unsuccessful campaign (Langston, 2007).³ Major news outlets reported these polling results, suggesting that only the PAN or the PRD, which appeared tied in most electoral polls during the last 60 days of the campaign, had any chance of winning the election. The news media also reported that many political figures tied to the PRI either explicitly or implicitly endorsed the PAN candidate. In this context, electoral polls appear to have conditioned elites' behavior, as the PRI seemingly abandoned its own presidential candidate, potentially affecting voters' expectations about which candidate would most likely win on election day.

Indeed, nationally representative surveys conducted a few days before election day (pooled data from three national polls⁴) analyzed a potential direct link between polling results and voters' preferences by investigating if voters were aware of the candidates' standing in the polls. Table 1 presents voters' perceptions of each candidate's electoral standing a month before election day («Which candidate is leading in the polls? And a follow-up: «Which candidate is in second place?», complete question wordings in table A1 in the Appendix). The results of

3. During the primary season (between October and December 2015, not reported in figure 1), the PRI scored second place in many electoral polls.

4. Based on three nationally representative surveys conducted in the weeks before election day. The Mexican survey research firm BGC Beltrán y Asocs conducted the polls. The presidential election was held on July 2. More information located in Appendix B

Figure 1. Campaign Polling (Mexico 2006)



Source: Electoral Polling Results (Author's Datasets)

the entire sample mirrored what the major news outlets were reporting at the time: a tie between the PAN and the PRD (31 % thought the PAN was leading, 29 % that responded that the PRD was placed first, and 7 % believed that the PAN and PRD were tied). Only ten percent mentioned that the PRI was in first place.

However, when the sample is split across partisan groups—consistent with hypothesis 1— it provides evidence of partisan differences in perceptions about which candidate is leading in the polls: seven out of every ten partisans who self-identified with the PAN or the PRD thought that their co-partisan candidate was first in the polls. Their knowledge of polling information seems to be a combination of objective information (as «objective» as electoral polling can be) and partisan reinforcement. In turn, the partisan group that was more likely to behave in a strategic way—PRI partisans—were split between those who referred that the PRI candidate was leading in the polls (32 %), those who mentioned another candidate (39 %), and those who selected the «don't know» answer (23 %).

Table 1. Candidate Perceived as Leading According to Electoral Polling (Mexico 2006)

Scenarios According to Voters' Responses	Expectations about Election Results (Across Partisan Groups)				
	Entire Sample (N=3,595)	Party Identification			
		PAN (N=746)	PRI (N=695)	PRD (N=525)	Independents (N=1,445)
1 st place: PAN	31	69	18	10	28
1 st place: PRI	9	3	32	2	5
1 st place: PRD	29	9	17	69	30
Tie PAN-PRD	7	7	4	5	10
Other	4	1	5	2	6
«Don't know»	19	10	23	12	22
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: BGC Beltrán y Asocs

If voters are fairly informed about candidates' standing in the polls, what are the electoral consequences of voters' expectations? In other words, what effect does polling information have on vote intention? Table 2 presents evidence of a learning effect because polling information helps voters make up their minds regarding their candidate preference (hypothesis 2). Voters who are aware of polling information (i.e. who have a response to the question «Which candidate is leading the polls?») are less likely to answer the vote choice question with «don't know» (the likelihood decreases from 20 to 10 percent, $p < 0.01$) in the complete sample—even when variables that might affect information acquisition, such as campaign interest and voters' levels of education, are controlled for. As expected, this effect is particularly strong among independents who do not have a co-partisan candidate to support (the likelihood of a «don't know» answer decreases from 43 percent to 22 percent, $p < 0.01$, figure 2). Although the effect is not as strong, partisans are also more likely to have a defined vote preference when they are aware of polling information: «don't know» answers decrease from 10 to 5 percent, $p < 0.01$). In table A2 in the Appendix, the models also control for political information. Although this variable was only included in two of the three surveys, the results do not substantially differ when controlling for such a variable.

Table 2. Logistic Regressions Models, Polling Information and Vote Choice (Learning Effect)

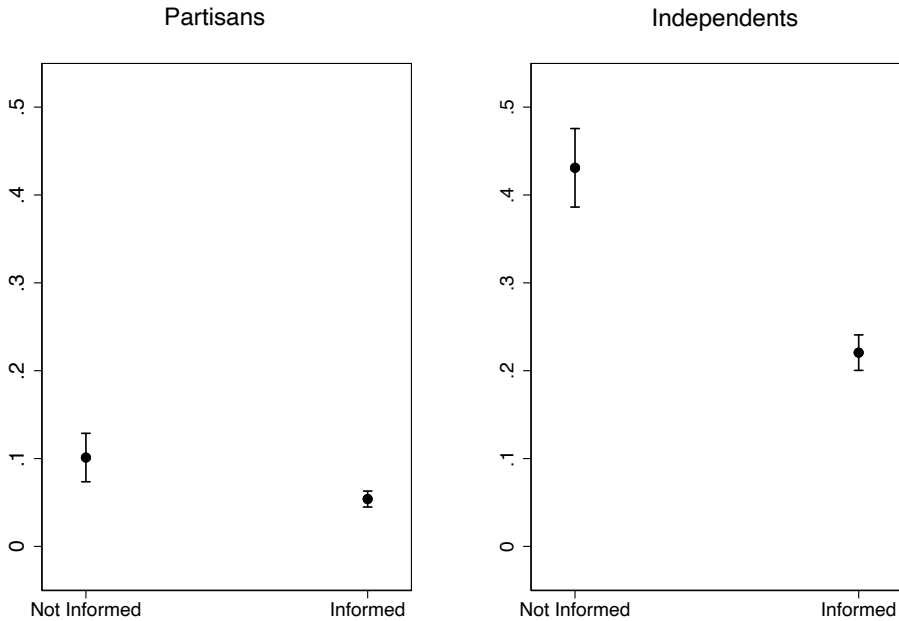
	All Voters	Partisans	Independents
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Informed about Polling	-0.91*** (0.12)	-0.69*** (0.22)	-1.02*** (0.14)
Partisan	-1.69*** (0.11)		
Education	-0.08 (0.05)	0.05 (0.09)	-0.14** (0.06)
Campaign Interest	0.10 (0.10)	0.17 (0.19)	0.07 (0.12)
Female	0.02*** (0.00)	0.01** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.00)
Age	-0.14 (0.13)	0.04 (0.23)	-0.24 (0.15)
Survey 1	-0.08 (0.12)	0.04 (0.23)	-0.13 (0.15)
Survey 2	-0.10 (0.29)	-2.34*** (0.51)	0.18 (0.35)
Constant	3,573 0.150	2,079 0.0319	1,494 0.0750
Observations	-0.91***	-0.69***	-1.02***
Pseudo R-squared	(0.12)	(0.22)	(0.14)

Standard errors in parentheses, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

DV= Vote Intention (1=Don't know; 0=Defined Vote Choice)

Source: Analysis based on BGC Beltrán y Asocs's datasets

Figure 2. Probability of replying «don't know»



Source: Analysis based on BGC Beltrán y Asocs's datasets

Finally, in terms of the third hypothesis, polling information also triggers a strategic behavior effect. Table 3 shows that the connection between PRI partisans who are aware that their co-partisan candidate is unlikely to win the election and their party is weakened: they overcome their partisan bias and defect from their co-partisan candidate. Specifically, table 3 presents PRI partisans' probability of voting for the PRI. The main independent variable is PRI partisans' expectation that (1) the PRI was trailing in the polls; (2) the PRI was leading in the polls, and; (3) they were unaware of the polling information («don't know» response). Indeed, PRI partisans were more likely to defect when they were aware that their co-partisan candidate was unlikely to win the election than when they were not aware ($p < 0.01$, vote for the PRI candidate decreases from 95 to 67 percent when PRI partisans are aware of polling information, see figure 3 below). In other words, the connection between partisanship and voting behavior is weaker among voters who were aware of their candidate's standing in the polls; one in every three PRI partisans strategically defected, changing their vote preference a few days before election day. It is important to highlight that PRI defectors were split in their vote choice: they did not bandwagon to a specific candidate. They strategically changed their vote choice for the candidate of whom they had a better opinion: 44 % of them reported supporting the PRD candidate and 39 % supported the PAN candidate

**Table 3. Polling Information and Vote Choice (Strategic Behavior Effect).
Multinomial Logistic Regressions**

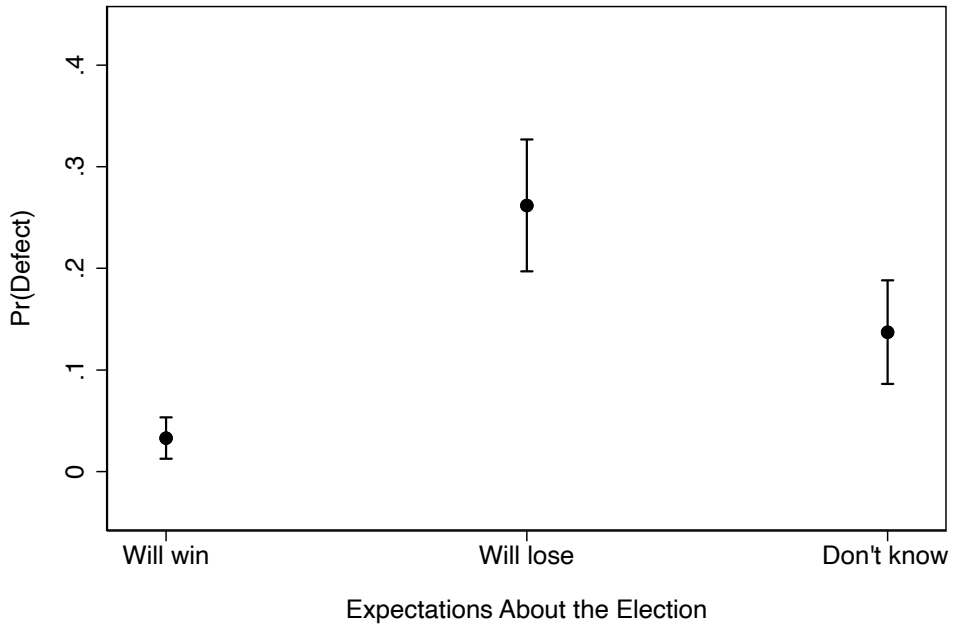
	PRI Partisans			
	Other	DK	Other	DK
	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)
Base Category «PRI Will Win»				
PRI Expectation: Will Lose	2.47*** (0.43)	1.28** (0.59)	2.43*** (0.44)	1.11* (0.61)
PRI Expectation: Don't Know	1.41*** (0.46)	1.43*** (0.54)	1.61*** (0.48)	1.05* (0.58)
Education			0.05 (0.14)	0.07 (0.22)
Campaign Interest			0.28** (0.13)	-0.06 (0.21)
Female			0.00 (0.30)	-0.08 (0.43)
Age			0.01 (0.01)	0.04*** (0.01)
Survey 1	0.17 (0.35)	1.35** (0.66)	0.31 (0.36)	1.24* (0.67)
Survey 2	0.14 (0.35)	1.34** (0.67)	0.22 (0.36)	1.16* (0.68)
Constant	-3.42*** (0.44)	-4.70*** (0.71)	-4.79*** (0.92)	-6.15*** (1.43)
Observations	501	501	494	494
Pseudo R-squared	0.104	0.104	0.12	0.12

Standard errors in parentheses, *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

DV = Vote for the PRI. 1=PRI (Omitted Category), 2=Not PRI, 3=DK

Source: Analysis based on BGC Beltrán y Asocs's datasets

Figure 3. Probability of defecting from the PRI candidate (among PRI partisans)



Source: Analysis based on BGC Beltrán y Asocs's datasets

These overall findings suggest that PRI voters who defected from their co-partisan candidate as a result of polling information increased the proportion of voters who changed their vote preference in this election by three to four percentage points⁵ (without taking into consideration other partisan groups or independents who lean toward the PRI). This vote shift is particularly relevant in elections like the 2006 presidential election in Mexico, in which the PAN candidate won the presidency by a margin of just 0.56 % of the official vote. These data suggest that polling effects and strategic behavior might explain a significant proportion of campaign effects, particularly those voters who shift their support in favor of a candidate against their political predispositions—a phenomenon that most campaign studies normally conceptualize as campaign persuasion (Greene, 2011). In comparative perspective, this proportion of vote swing equates the amount of vote shifts in American presidential elections (Finkel, 1993). The next

5. During the 2006 presidential campaign, 21 percent of voters self-identified with the PRI. Among PRI respondents who did not expect the party to win the election, 28 % defected, which corresponds to 3.4 percent of the entire sample.

section describes a survey experiment conducted during the 2015 gubernatorial elections in Mexico that isolates the information provided by the poll allowing for an assessment of the causal effect of polling information on voters' behavior a week before election day.

5. EXPERIMENTAL DATA: 2015 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS IN MEXICO

Between 2000-2018, the PAN, the PRI, and the PRD were the main contenders at the subnational level in Mexico. Unlike the national level where electoral competition tended to be dominated by the left-right economic cleavage (Moreno, 2009), gubernatorial elections—during those years—brought a different cleavage: competition against the incumbent PRI. Previous studies relying on observational data have found that anti-PRI voters behaved strategically during Mexico's transition to democracy (1997–2000 elections: Domínguez, 2009; Bruhn, 1999; Magaloni and Poiré, 2004). To our knowledge, this is the first study to rely on experimental data in an attempt to isolate the effect of polling information on strategic voting in Latin America. These elections also allow us to test another expressive component of partisanship in polarized contexts and particularly highlight the role of anti-PRI feelings.

While in 2000 the country transitioned to democracy and the PRI lost the Presidency, there are states in which the PRI has never lost power at the gubernatorial level up until today. The center-right PAN and the center-left PRD have therefore joined efforts into anti-PRI coalitions and, in many cases, successfully taken the PRI out of office at the state level.⁶ However, in Michoacán and Nuevo León—the two Mexican states where the following survey experiments took place—the opposition was fragmented since the PAN and the PRD did not negotiate any electoral coalition. The two states share a similar political scenario. Most electoral polls released by major media outlets reported that the incumbent PRI was either tied with or very close to an opposition candidate (the PRD candidate in Michoacán and the independent candidate in Nuevo León). In both scenarios, the PAN and several minor political parties were trailing behind in the polls. Moreover, anti-PRI feelings increased throughout this period—after the PRI's return to the Mexican Presidency (2012-2018, see figure A1 in the Appendix)—due to a general perception of failed governance amid corruption scandals (Flores Macías,

6. For example, in 2016, the PAN-PRD coalition defeated the PRI in three Mexican states that have never experienced alternation in power: Durango, Veracruz, and Quintana Roo. The PAN also defeated the PRI in Chihuahua via an informal electoral coalition with several PRD factions.

2018; Greene and Sanchez Talanquer, 2018). The latter seemed to increase voters' willingness to support political change, particularly in those states where the PRI still held local government, as was the case of both Michoacán and Nuevo León. This context makes these two particular gubernatorial elections ideal for testing polling information's effect on voters' strategic behavior.

6. SURVEY EXPERIMENT DESIGN

The survey experiment was embedded in the second-wave of an original gubernatorial panel survey conducted in two Mexican states (Michoacán and Nuevo León). The polling firm BGC Beltrán y Asocs. conducted a telephone survey between the 1st and 3rd of June⁷. The election was held on Sunday, June 7th. The sample of the survey experiment roughly consisted of 650 respondents, representative at the state level (further methodological information is in table A3 in the Appendix). The sample was divided into two randomly-assigned groups that varied according to whether the respondent was informed about the results of an electoral poll. Randomization guarantees that the treatment and control groups in the sample are on average identical in both observable and unobservable characteristics. Any systematic difference in the answers to the treatment provides an estimate of the impact of being informed about the electoral poll on vote choice. The treatment appears balanced across observed covariates (see table A4 of the Appendix).

The survey experiment followed an indirect strategy to inform the respondents of the polling results. The survey randomly assigned a question asking if the respondent was aware of the results of a recently released poll, which included information about the electoral standing of each major candidate. The vignette excluded the specific name of the newspaper and the name of the survey research firm in order to avoid having the political leaning of the newspaper or the prestige of the polling firm affect the results of the survey experiment. Similarly, the vignette did not include any message inviting third-party supporters to defect, as previous experimental studies had done; instead, the experiment simply provided polling information without any interpretation. Respondents who were randomly assigned to the control group were not asked whether they were aware of the results of such a poll.

In both states, the vignette gave the lead to the PRI candidate who was tied, or closely tied with an opposition candidate (the PRD candidate in Michoacán,

7. First Wave: Mar, 14-16, 2015. Second Wave: June 1-3, 2015

the independent candidate in Nuevo León). According to the vignette, the PAN candidate was trailing behind in third place:

MICHOACÁN: Did you know that an electoral poll, recently released by a national newspaper, reports that the PRI candidate, Ascensión Orihuela, and the PRD candidate, Silvano Aureoles, are tied with the 36 percent of the vote intention? Meanwhile, the PAN candidate, Luisa María Calderón, has 23 percent of vote intention.

NUEVO LEÓN: Did you know that an electoral poll was recently released by a national newspaper according to which the PRI candidate, Ivonne Álvarez, is leading with 38 percent of vote intention? The independent candidate is in second place with 32 percent of vote intention, and the PAN candidate, Felipe de Jesús Cantú, is in third place with 20 percent of vote intention.

Subsequently, both treatment and control groups were asked a question about vote intention («*Between [NAMES OF THE CANDIDATES and PARTY] which candidate would you vote for?*»), which constitutes the dependent variable in the following section (1= support for anti-PRI leading candidate; 0=otherwise). To account for potential state variations, the logistic models reported in the next section include a state dummy variable.⁸

Just like in the observational data section of this paper, voters' responsiveness to polling information is expected to be moderated by partisanship. However, in young democracies, some voters have weakly formed partisan attachments that allow them to change to independents (Lupu, 2013; Baker *et al.*, 2016), or even shift their identification to another political party during the campaign period (Castro Cornejo, 2021a). To take such shifts into account, and taking advantage of the panel nature of the data, the analysis separates partisans who consistently self-reported identifying with the same political party throughout the campaign (between the first and the second wave of the panel survey) and those who updated their partisanship. The results also include an analysis of anti-PRI voters; specifically, it identifies voters who are more likely to support the leading opposition candidate over the PRI candidate, and vice versa, based on voters' self-declared probability of supporting each candidate. This operationalization based on voters' preferences among the various candidates make it possible to focus exclusively on vote choice, instead of on indirect measures (such as candidate

8. The present paper does not aim to study state variations. Moreover, it does not have the necessary observations to do so.

evaluations, feeling thermometers, ideological utility functions), which might depart from voters' decision-making.

Using a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means not likely and 10 means very likely, how likely are you to vote for (CANDIDATE NAME) so he/she can be the next governor of the state?

7. RESULTS

Consistent with the findings reported in the observational data section of this paper, providing information about polling results increases the proportion of respondents with declared candidate preference (learning effect, hypothesis 2). On average, the «don't know» answers decrease from 26 to 19 percent in the treatment group (7-percentage points, $p < 0.05$). This means that polling information provides voters with a learning opportunity making voters more likely to report a defined vote intention. The following lines discuss the polling information's influence on voters' strategic behavior.

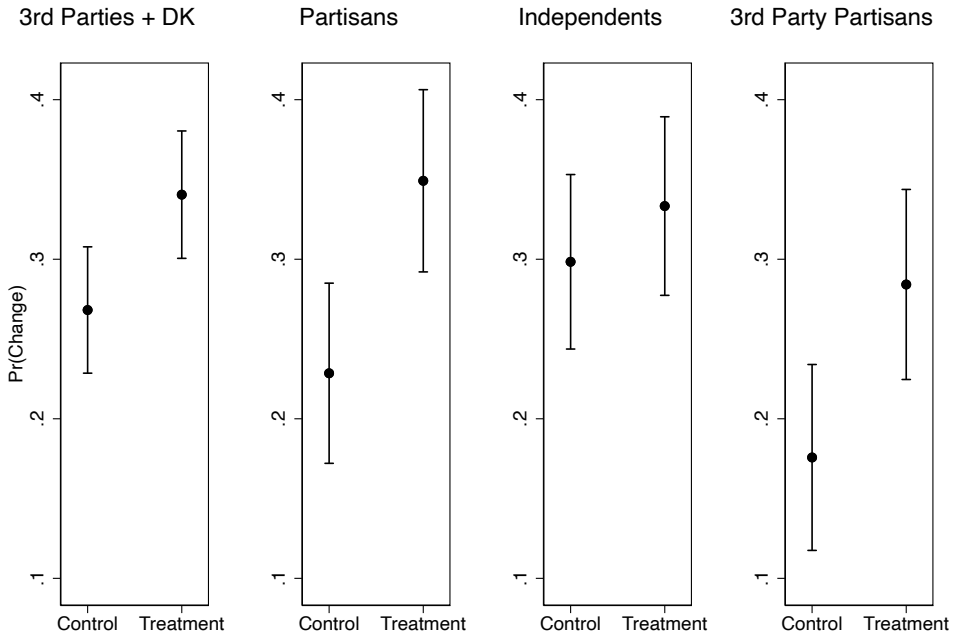
Given that responses to the poll treatment are expected to only affect voters who will strategically interpret the polling information, the analysis focuses on the portion of the sample in which strategic behavior is anticipated to occur (i.e., respondents who identify with parties trailing in the polls and don't know voters). As argued by this study, the latter are expected to shift their support in favor of the leading (anti-PRI) opposition candidate since at that moment the main cleavage of electoral competition at the state level in Mexico was the PRI vs. anti-PRI dimension.

When voters are informed of polling results, on average, the strategic voting effect is seven percentage points in the treatment group ($p < 0.06$, figure 4, table A5 in the Appendix presents descriptive statistics splitting the sample across states: table A6 in the Appendix reports the complete regressions including a state dummy). Among voters who support parties trailing in the polls and don't-know voters, the effect is stronger among partisans (12 percentage points, $p < 0.05$) and among partisans who support candidates trailing in the polls⁹ (14 percentage points, $p < 0.07$). The latter are willing to shift their candidate preference as a result of the expectation that the PRI candidate is likely to win the election. The polling effect is also statistically significant among anti-PRI voters,

9. Since the N is too small to report results across partisan groups, this category (respondents who support parties trailing in the polls) contains PAN partisans as well as respondents who self-identify with minor opposition parties at that time (Morena, PT, Movimiento Ciudadano).

whose likelihood of supporting the leading anti-PRI candidate increases by 14 percentage points ($p < 0.05$, figure 5).

Figure 4. Probability of Engaging in Strategic Voting



Source: Analysis based on Author's original survey

Moreover, consistent with the findings of the observational analysis, the treatment weakened the connection between partisanship and vote choice among third-party supporters (PAN). While 82 percent of PAN respondents supported their co-partisan candidate in the control group, this number declined to 76 % in the treatment group. These polling effects might be driven by voters' weakly formed partisan attachments, which could have allowed them to update their partisanship throughout the campaign. However, this does not seem to be the case: vote shifts in response to polling information are stronger among voters who consistently self-identified with the PAN; they report a larger vote shift in response to the treatment (a decrease of 10 percentage points).

A second reason that sheds light on voters' strategic behavior relates to the electoral behavior of undecided voters. The experimental design allows us to identify the direction in which undecided voters shifted in response to electoral polling. As previously mentioned, «don't know» responses decreased by seven

**Figure 5. Probability of Engaging in Strategic Voting
Anti-PRI Voters**



Source: Analysis based on Author's original survey

percent on average. These shifts decisively contributed to increasing the main opposition candidate's vote. Among undecided voters who preferred the leading opposition candidate to the PRI candidate, «don't know» responses decreased from 16 % to 8 % in the treatment group. Instead, among undecided voters who preferred the PRI candidate to the leading opposition candidate, this share increased from 6 % to 13 %. These results suggest that polling information not only triggers vote-choice shifts among supporters of candidates trailing in the polls; it also produces a learning effect in new voters who had not previously reported a defined vote choice. In this particular case, it makes them strategic voters supporting the leading anti-PRI opposition candidate.

8. DISCUSSION

This research contributes to the literature by building a bridge between our knowledge of campaign effects and studies on strategic voting and by providing a more complete picture of the factors that explain why so many voters change

their vote preference during Latin American presidential election campaigns. Some voters are willing to abandon their co-partisan candidate as a product of strategic considerations: partisans who are informed of polls are able to overcome their partisan bias and engage in strategic voting. These strategic shifts take place in the last days of the campaign and increase the proportion of voters who change their vote preferences during campaigns.

How the results of this paper travel to other countries should be examined by future studies. The fact that Blais *et al.* (2018) did not find significant polling effects brings attention to the conditions under which polling information is likely to affect voters' strategic efforts. In their study, two center-left parties were actively competing to be the main challenger to the Conservative Party potentially underscoring voters' likelihood to become strategic voters. In contrast, in the elections studied in this research, there was a clear third party trailing behind in the polls that could have made voters' decision to engage in strategic voting easier. Regardless, the results of this paper are likely to apply to most party systems in Latin America, since most countries in the region have multiparty systems with FPTP electoral rules with two-round elections, in which voters have strong incentives to engage in strategic voting in the first round and support a candidate with a better chance of advancing to the second round. As Weitz-Shapiro and Winters (2019) find for the 2019 presidential election, coordination efforts do not necessarily need three parties with one trailing behind the other two. In fact, the findings of this paper are particularly relevant to elections in which the opposition is fragmented and has a strong incentive to coordinate efforts in the first round to throw the incumbent party out of office (e.g. the 2017 presidential election in Ecuador and coordination effort within coalitions in Chile, among others). While coordination efforts do not always succeed (e.g. coordination in support of the leading centrist candidate in the first round of the 2018 presidential election in Colombia), polling information offers elites and voters alike important feedback that informs their strategic decision-making.

While the survey experiment establishes that the source of the polling information can shape voters' strategic behavior, how this result generalizes to real-life settings remains an open question. Treatment effects in real world contexts could be diminished by other campaign events or voters' inattention to the media. Like all survey experiments, this study cannot place a value on these various factors (or speak about how non-respondents would have responded to the experimental stimulus or voters' survey taking behavior, Castro Cornejo, 2019). However, the logic of this paper's findings (e.g. experimental and non-experimental evidence) is sufficiently compelling that it would be extremely surprising if the source of the polling information played no role in real political campaigns. Moreover, since conducting the survey experiment during a real campaign increased the external validity of the study presented in this paper, it is also plausible that voters who

were part of the control group were aware of the polling information. If this is the case, the results of this study are conservative. The difference between the treatments and a «pure» control group would be larger. Similarly, this research does not analyze the influence of third-party candidates' endorsements, coordination cues, or media endorsements, among other events that can also trigger strategic behavior. For these reasons, this article provides a lower bound for strategic behavior, and the latter might be more dramatic and significant under different circumstances.

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APPENDIX

**Table A1. Questions Wordings.
Electoral Polls (Observational Data)**

English	
Vote Choice	On July 2nd elections to choose President will be held. If elections were held today, which candidate or political party would you vote for?
Partisanship	Regardless of which party you vote for, do you normally think or yourself as panista, priista or perredista or any other political party?
Candidate Evaluations	Do you know [NAME OF THE CANDIDATE]? What opinion do you have of him: very good, good, fair, bad, very bad?
Voters' Expectations about the Election	Which candidate is leading in the polls? And follow-up: Which candidate is in second place?
Campaign Interest	How much attention do you pay to news about political campaigns for the next Presidential elections: very much, some, not much, not at all?
Survey Experiment	
Vote Choice	If elections were held today, between [NAMES OF THE CANDIDATES and PARTY] which candidate would you vote for?
Partisanship	Regardless of which party you vote for, do you normally think or yourself as panista, priista or perredista or any other political party?
Ordered Preferences to identify anti-PRI voters	Using a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means not likely and 10 means very likely, how likely are you to vote for (CANDIDATE NAME) so he/she can be the next governor of the state?
Anti-PRI > PRI	If respondents prefer non-PRI candidates vis-à-vis the PRI candidate (higher responses on the 0-10 scale)
PRI > Anti-PRI	If respondents prefer the PRI candidate vis-à-vis the non-PRI candidates (higher responses on the 0-10 scale)

Source: BGC Beltrán y Asocs. and Original Study

Table A2. Including Political Information as a Control Variable
Logistic Regressions Models
DV= Vote Intention (1=Don't know; 0=Defined Vote Choice)

	All Voters	Partisans	Independents
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Informed about Polling	-0.92*** (0.14)	-0.53** (0.27)	-1.10*** (0.16)
Partisan	-1.68*** (0.14)		
Education	-0.05 (0.07)	0.15 (0.12)	-0.15* (0.08)
Political Information	-0.40*** (0.14)	-0.76*** (0.25)	-0.29* (0.17)
Campaign Interest	-0.11* (0.06)	-0.14 (0.10)	-0.09 (0.07)
Female	0.04 (0.13)	0.29 (0.23)	-0.07 (0.16)
Age	0.02*** (0.00)	0.02** (0.01)	0.02*** (0.01)
Survey 1	0.08 (0.12)	-0.01 (0.23)	0.14 (0.15)
Constant	-0.47 (0.33)	-2.77*** (0.60)	-0.18 (0.40)
Observations	2,377	1,373	1,004
Pseudo R-squared	0.16	0.05	0.09

Note: Since the surveys were pooled, the models include n-1 dummy variables. Base Category =1. Political information was not included in the questionnaire of one of the surveys. Therefore, only two polls were pooled (N=2,385).

Source: Analysis based on BGC Beltrán y Asocs's datasets

Table A3
Attrition Rate in Second Wave

Second Wave Interview Status	Michoacán	Nuevo León
Complete interview	39%	45%
Incomplete interview	2%	2%
Made an appointment but did not answer	22%	22%
Respondent does not live in that house anymore	11%	9%
Did not answer the phone	10%	8%
Telephone out of service	4%	5%
Did not accept the second interview	2%	3%
Did not accept a second interview (since first wave)	7%	3%
Answering machine	1%	2%
Telephone - Busy	2%	1%

Source: Author's original survey

Demographic Variables (Wave 1 and Wave 2)

	Michoacán		Nuevo León	
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 1	Wave 2
Female	50%	54%	51%	55%
Age				
18-25	11%	8%	11%	9%
26-40	20%	18%	18%	16%
41-60	46%	48%	40%	43%
61+	23%	25%	32%	42%
Income (minimum wage)				
0 - 1 MW	8%	5%	4%	3%
1 - 3 MW	26%	24%	20%	18%

CASTRO CORNEJO
DO (PERCEPTIONS OF) ELECTORAL POLLING AFFECT THE VOTE?

	Michoacán		Nuevo León	
	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 1	Wave 2
3 - 5 MW	13%	15%	11%	12%
5 - 7 MW	3%	6%	4%	3%
7 - 10 MW	10%	8%	10%	13%
10+ MW	5%	6%	14%	14%
Education				
None	13%	13%	9%	9%
Elementary	16%	15%	13%	13%
Secondary	19%	21%	19%	23%
High School	24%	23%	24%	24%
College	28%	28%	36%	32%

Source: Author's original survey

Table A4. Balance across Treatment/Control Group

Variables	Treatment			Control			P-Value
	Obs	Mean	Std.Err	Obs	Mean	Std.Err	
Female	365	.5342466	.0261456	311	.5498392	.0282567	0.6856
Age	365	52.6411	.8501002	311	51.23151	.8717187	0.2495
Elementary School	365	.4438356	.0260413	311	.392283	.0277313	0.1764
High School	365	.2356164	.0222437	311	.221865	.0235989	0.6722
College +	365	.3205479	.0244611	311	.3858521	.0276481	0.0763
Partisan	365	.5342466	.0261456	311	.488746	.0283909	0.2388
PAN Partisan	365	.2246575	.0218754	311	.1832797	.0219742	0.1851
PRI Partisan	365	.1616438	.0192949	311	.1736334	.0215141	0.6777
PRD Partisan	365	.0493151	.011349	311	.0257235	.0089914	0.1122
Independent	365	.3589041	.025142	311	.414791	.0279827	0.1370

CASTRO CORNEJO
DO (PERCEPTIONS OF) ELECTORAL POLLING AFFECT THE VOTE?

Variables	Treatment			Control			P-Value
	Obs	Mean	Std.Err	Obs	Mean	Std.Err	
Other Partisan	365	.0986301	.0156281	311	.1061093	.0174919	0.7493
PAN (Vote probability)	358	5.094972	.2090389	293	4.699659	.2342213	0.2078
PRI (Vote Probability)	352	3.525568	.2107911	295	3.335593	.218687	0.5338
PRD/Bronco (Probability)	355	4.002817	.2189226	295	4.00339	.2231551	0.9985

Source: Analysis based on Author's original survey

**Table A5. Descriptive Statistics (Vote Intention)
Among entire sample of potential strategic voters**

	Nuevo León (N=290)		Michoacán (N=255)	
	Control	Treatment	Control	Treatment
Other	69	61	78	72
Vote for anti-PRI leading candidate	31	39	22	28

Source: Analysis based on Author's original survey

Among entire sample of potential strategic voters (only partisans)

	Nuevo León (N=155)		Michoacán (N=102)	
	Control	Treatment	Control	Treatment
Other	75	61	80	71
Vote for anti-PRI leading candidate	25	39	20	29

Source: Analysis based on Author's original survey

Among entire sample of potential strategic voters (only third-party partisans)

	Nuevo León (N=133)		Michoacán (N=65)	
	Control	Treatment	Control	Treatment
Other	77	64	93	86
Vote for anti-PRI leading candidate	23	36	7	14

Source: Analysis based on Author's original survey

Among anti-PRI voters

	Nuevo León (N=142)		Michoacán (N=76)	
	Control	Treatment	Control	Treatment
Other	38	26	36	20
Vote for anti-PRI leading candidate	62	74	64	80

Source: Analysis based on Author's original survey

Table A6. Logistic Regression Model – Vote Choice Effect (among opposition and undecided voters)

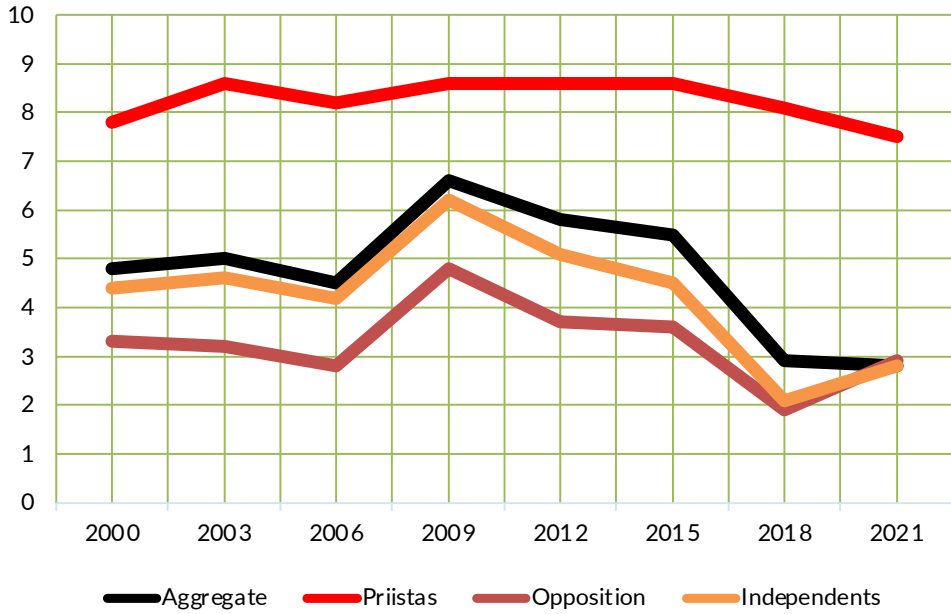
	Aggregate Effect	Partisans	Partisans Trailing in the Polls	Independents	Anti-PRI > PRI	PRI > Anti-PRI
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Strategic Voting Effect	0.35*	0.60**	0.65*	0.16	0.66**	-0.09
	(0.19)	(0.28)	(0.36)	(0.26)	(0.30)	(1.44)
State dummy	-0.47**	-0.41	-1.28***	-0.55**	0.21	-0.09
	(0.19)	(0.29)	(0.45)	(0.26)	(0.32)	(1.44)
Constant	-0.80***	-1.06***	-1.24***	-0.58***	0.43*	-3.48***
	(0.16)	(0.25)	(0.30)	(0.22)	(0.23)	(1.26)
Observations	545	257	198	288	218	73
Pseudo R-sq	0.01	0.02	0.06	0.01	0.02	0.00

DV = Support for the anti-PRI candidate with better standing in the polls. 1: Anti-PRI candidate / 0: Otherwise

Standard Errors in parenthesis; *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Source: Analysis based on Author's original survey

Figure A1. Feeling Thermometer PRI (0: very bad opinion; 10 very good opinion).



Source: Mexico's National Electoral Study (Beltrán *et al.*, 2018)

APPENDIX B

The national electoral polls reported in this study were conducted by the polling firm BGC Ulises Beltrán y Asocs., with a sample size of 1,200 effective interviews. The samples were distributed in a probabilistic sample of 120 electoral precincts. The surveys were conducted through face-to-face interviews with citizens over 18 years old with a voting ID who live in the country. Surveys were conducted the month prior to election day on the following dates:

Table B1. 2006 Electoral Polling

Survey	Date
1	May 31 - June 3, 2006
2	June 16 - 19, 2006
3	June 24 - 26, 2006

Source: BGC Beltrán y Asocs.

The selection of the electoral precincts was made through systematic random sampling with probability proportional to the size of the precinct, where the size is defined by the nominal list. The selection of the block and the house corresponds to a systematic process, while that of the interviewee was made by random selection. The sample size allowed to obtain results representative at the national level with a confidence level of 95 % and a theoretical margin of error of ± 2.9 percentage points.